

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-5

NEW YORK TIMES
3 July 1984

Mexico Moving to Extradite Ex-Police Chief

By RICHARD J. MEISLIN
Special to The New York Times

MEXICO CITY, July 2 — Mexico today began seeking the extradition from the United States of Mexico City's former police chief, who is wanted on a wide range of corruption charges here.

The effort to prosecute the former police chief has been widely viewed here as a key test of the seriousness of President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado's "moral renovation" campaign.

After a months-long manhunt that spanned three continents, the 61-year-old former police chief, Arturo Durazo Moreno, was captured Friday night in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was seized at Customs by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and United States deputy marshals and was held without bail.

Mr. Durazo was regarded as one of the most powerful figures in the administration of President José López Portillo, and became extremely wealthy during his six years as police chief, despite a salary of only \$65 a week. The charges against him include tax fraud, extortion, smuggling of contraband and possession of illegal weapons.

Corruption a Campaign Issue

The issue of controlling Mexico's official corruption was a cornerstone of

Mr. de la Madrid's campaign for office, and has become a point of even greater sensitivity since the newspaper columnist Jack Anderson accused the President himself of having transferred \$162 million from the country since taking office in December 1982.

Mr. Anderson's two reports were attributed initially to the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Council and later only to "secret sources." They were strenuously denied by the Mexican Government, which also successfully kept reports of them from appearing in all but one Mexican news outlet.

Mexico also made a diplomatic pro-

test to the United States, calling the articles "extremely injurious" to the Mexican President.

The State Department responded by praising Mr. de la Madrid's campaign against corruption and stating that "the information available in all the branches of the Government" led it to conclude that "President de la Madrid has established a high standard, personally as well as officially, to fulfill his commitment to bring honesty to his Government."

'Museum of Corruption'

The Government itself has made Mr. Durazo's purported abuse of office a major focus of attention, turning an ostentatious \$2.5 million estate Mr. Durazo built outside the city into a public "museum of corruption."

But officials of the Mexican Attorney General's office and the United States Embassy here warned today that the extradition proceedings could be long and complicated. Mr. Durazo has already hired a battery of lawyers to help him avoid facing the Mexican courts.

If convicted on all charges, he could face a sentence of up to 34 years, according to the Government press agency, Notimex.

"It does not seem logical he would go without a fight," said a spokesman for the Attorney General's office here. "It could be a very long process."

Arrest Warrant Issued

Mr. Durazo would first have to be transferred to Los Angeles, where a Federal judge issued a provisional warrant for his arrest at the request of the Mexican Government last June 30, according to the Federal Bureau of In-

vestigation. A hearing on whether to transfer him is expected to take place in Puerto Rico within the next 10 days.

In Los Angeles, a hearing will be held on whether to extradite him to Mexico. While extradition is not certain, a United States Embassy official here said that "provisional warrants for arrest are not issued lightly," indicating that Mexico had presented reasonable evidence to support its charges.

Officials from the Attorney General's Office and the Mexico City Prosecutor's Office arrived in Washington on Sunday and began pursuing their case for extradition with United States officials today, according to the Attorney General's office.